

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

Tuesday, January 25, 2011

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Karla Fox, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Peter Millman, Ruth Moynihan, Betsy Paterson, Karin Randolph, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Harry Birkenruth; Honey Birkenruth; Tom Callahan; Geoff Fitzgerald (BL Companies); Andy Graves (BL Companies); Toni Moran; Greg Padick (Town Director of Planning); Alexandria Roe; and Macon Toledano (LeylandAlliance)

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from December 15, 2010.

Betsy Paterson moved to approve the Minutes from December 15, 2010 as presented.

Peter Millman seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Continued Review and Recommendation on Zoning Permit for Storrs Center Phases 1A & 1B

Mr. Bacon provided a recap of the previous two meetings and outlined the expected process for the evening.

Macon Toledano told the Committee that the Inland Wetlands Agency and the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a modification request for Phases 1A and 1B and a special permit modification for DL-1, respectively. He commented that the two approvals were important steps that paved the way to move ahead with the rest of the process.

Mr. Toledano said that the design team had tried to listen carefully to all of the Planning and Design Committee members' comments. He said that, since the last meeting, their focus had been to further refine the plans based on those comments.

Geoff Fitzgerald reviewed the site plan with the Committee. He said that there had been only a few minor changes. Mr. Fitzgerald explained that another lighting option had been added. In addition to the lights that would match those currently located along the pedestrian walkway, an alternative, high-efficiency LED option was added.

Mr. Toledano commented that the LED option is not as pretty but that it is dramatically more efficient. He explained that the light feature does not include a traditional glass globe.

Greg Padick stated that there will be a number of accessory features, such as lighting, that will need to be coordinated throughout the entire project, so it may be necessary to provide flexibility in the approval so that those details can be thoroughly discussed in the context of the whole project and not just Phase 1A and 1B.

Mr. Fitzgerald agreed with Mr. Padick's suggested approach, especially because of the number of participants working on the different pieces of the project, such as the teams for the intermodal center and for the garage. He added that the accessory features are usually the last to go in, so there is time to work on them.

Mr. Padick shared a concern from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the parking area near the Daily Campus building. He said that some commissioners were concerned that cars would be backing into the line of traffic from the parking spots.

Mr. Toledano explained the layout of the parking and noted that they had to accommodate the seventeen Daily Campus spaces.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that, as the engineer of the plans, he felt comfortable with the layout. He reviewed a typical layout for parking for a grocery store or other retail and noted that the layout near the Daily Campus is more generous.

Mr. Toledano added that the spaces are almost all reserved for the Daily Campus, with the exception of some ADA-complaint spaces and a couple of landing zones. He said that it would not be an area in which the general public would look to park.

Ruth Moynihan asked if the parking lot behind Buckley Hall would still be student parking.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied that it would remain student parking. He noted that the University is considering different options regarding whether or not to keep the lot connected to other nearby lots or to close it off.

Ms. Moynihan asked if the plan to relocate the volleyball and basketball courts was still in place.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that the current plans show the volleyball and basketball courts near the Bishop Center but noted that they are not a part of the Special Design District. He said the University is considering other options for the location of the courts.

Mr. Millman suggested moving the courts to the front of Shippee.

Alex Roe asked about the location of the dumpsters and the railing.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that the railing was included as a safety measure but that he could look for a more appealing style.

Frank McNabb asked if there was space near Storrs Automotive for dropping off cars.

Mr. Toledano explained that there were five parking spaces solely for the use of Storrs Automotive in addition to the three bays.

Ms. Moynihan expressed concern that five spaces were not sufficient.

Mr. Padick said that for businesses located within a Planned Business – 2 zone (as Storrs Automotive will be), the business owner is required to provide a parking plan for approval.

Mr. Toledano said that the development team will discuss with Storrs Automotive the different options.

Mr. Bacon noted that at a previous meeting Mr. McNabb had asked about adding a crosswalk on Dog Lane.

Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed that the crosswalk had been added and reviewed the locations of each crosswalk on Dog Lane.

Ms. Roe asked if the issue of the temporary road near Store 24 had been resolved.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that they are actively working on it and that the CT DOT is very involved. He said that the CT DOT has high standards for temporary roads and that all options are being examined.

Ms. Moynihan asked about the status of the Thai restaurant and reiterated her desire to see the restaurant remain in the area.

Cynthia van Zelm explained that there are on-going discussions between the master developer and the business owner. She noted that the discussions between each business and the developer are private negotiations of which the Partnership is not a part.

Mr. Toledano confirmed Ms. van Zelm's statement that discussions are on-going and added that the business owners will have several options and will have to decide what is best for them.

Ms. Moynihan emphasized her concerns and said that she felt that having a downtown would not be worth it if existing businesses have to close.

Ms. van Zelm explained that each of the businesses that will need to relocate because of construction will be provided with relocation benefits.

Mr. Padick stated that all issues regarding the temporary road are being thoroughly discussed and assured the Committee that they should feel comfortable with the way in which the issue is being addressed.

Mr. McNabb asked if it would be possible to sell gasoline at the auto repair shop.

Mr. Bacon said no, the sale of gasoline in the area is restricted by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Ms. Paterson recalled that the DEP had grandfathered in the repair shop to move to the new location.

Mr. McNabb asked if the plan to use gas heat was still in place and, if so, where the tanks would be located.

Andy Graves explained that the plans call for natural gas piped in from existing lines so no tanks would be needed.

Mr. McNabb asked about the location of the recycling containers.

Mr. Graves explained that he has been working with the Town's Recycling Coordinator, Ginny Walton, for months to determine the locations and the estimated volume of trash and recycling that will be generated. He said that he and Ms. Walton had then worked with Willimantic Waste Paper to determine how to address those needs. They decided to have two eight-yard dumpsters, one each for recycling and for trash, with pick up three times a week. He said that this solution works for the space and will help mitigate any resulting odors because the pick up will be so frequent. Inside the residential floors, there will be 65-gallon receptacles with half-a-week capacity.

Mr. McNabb asked for clarification on the furnaces.

Mr. Graves explained that each residential unit will have its own furnace. He said that he originally wanted to use heat pumps, but the cost was too high and would have added at least \$1.5 million to cost of the project. He added that the heating and cooling systems included for the residential units are highly efficient and exceed the standards set in the Sustainability Guidelines for Storrs Center.

Ms. Moynihan asked if each residential unit would have its own thermostat.

Mr. Graves replied that they would and added that they would be programmable set-back thermostats to control each unit's furnace. He said that there would be a high-efficient, gas-fired, central hot water system.

Mr. McNabb asked about the plans to deal with snow on the roof.

Mr. Graves replied that bar snow guards would be used, as required in the building code.

Ms. Moynihan asked if there were plans for a green roof on any of the buildings.

Mr. Toledano said that Dr. Michael Klemens, the project ecologist, had specifically said that green roofs would not be allowed for most of the project because they divert water from the wetlands. Mr. Toledano reviewed the water treatment plans with the Committee and explained how rainwater would

be treated and released into the wetlands area. He said that the plan is to improve the health of the wetlands and noted that the US Army Corps of Engineers was very enthusiastic about the plan.

Pene Williams asked if there were plans to use gray water systems.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that they are not proposing a gray water system because it would require two sets of pipes and it would be very expensive.

Mr. McNabb asked about the fiberboard noted for use on the exterior.

Mr. Graves explained that the fiberboard would have the look of wood but would be more durable and require less maintenance. He referred Committee members to the design board for DL-1 from 2006, which included samples of the fiberboard. Mr. Graves then passed around display boards with samples of other materials planned for use in the façades. He explained the process of creating the cast stone.

Mr. Bacon asked if the reveal of the bricks would be the same as with full bricks.

Mr. Graves said once the bricks are installed, there will be no way to tell that it is not a full brick. He said special attention would be paid to the turns to ensure a consistent look of full brick.

Mr. Graves then reviewed the changes to the elevations with the Committee. He noted that there were only minor adjustments based on comments from previous meetings. He added that he was still in the process of matching the floor plans to the revised elevations.

Toni Moran asked if the slanted roofs resulted in lost space in the residential units on the top floors.

Mr. Graves explained that they are pulling the eaves out so only about a foot or so of ceiling and floor space will be lost inside the dwelling units.

Jon Hand said he thought that the north elevation of DL-2 did not match the south elevation.

Mr. Graves agreed and said that he would make that correction. He explained that the roofline of DL-2 had to be adjusted to meet the building code. The south elevation is shown correctly.

Ms. Moynihan said she was concerned with the size of the retail space in TS-2. She referred to the space listed at 30,000 square feet and commented that it was large.

Mr. Toledano explained that, because the tenants for TS-2 have not been confirmed yet, the team left the space open. He referred Ms. Moynihan to the other side of the building where, as examples, the team had shown the first floor divided into smaller spaces. He said that until the tenants are confirmed, the spaces are shown as examples only.

Mr. Graves noted that most of the work that was done on the façades since the last meeting was to add detail.

Ms. Roe said she did not see separate dining rooms in the residential units and asked for the reasoning behind that decision.

Mr. Graves said that he designed the residential units based on the requests given to him from EDR, who made their decisions based on the market studies they have conducted. He added that the state of Connecticut requires that every unit in a residential building be ADA-complaint, and so that constrains the design further.

Ms. Moynihan expressed her concern that the buildings will be too tall. She said that she thinks there should be only three residential floors.

Mr. Graves shared full-color depictions of the elevations with the Committee. He said that more are in process and will be ready for the Feb. 1 public hearing.

Mr. McNabb asked if there will be aluminum around the storefronts.

Mr. Graves said that there will be aluminum used but that it would be wrapped in hardy wood trim to create a more traditional look to the storefronts.

Ms. Roe asked if the back of the buildings could have similar detail to the front elevations, specifically for the building closest to the Daily Campus building.

Mr. Kueffner said he would like to see more detail added to the barn which will house the auto repair shop, specifically the north elevation. He suggested adding a window or faux door, transoms above the garage doors, and windows (instead of louvers) for the cupola.

Mr. Graves thanked Mr. Kueffner for his suggestions and said he will look into possibly incorporating some of them.

Ms. Moran noted that louvers are historically accurate.

Mr. Kueffner said he would also like to see mullions on the windows on the east elevation of the barn.

Mr. Padick suggested that, rather than create new plans for review, Mr. Graves could include a list of the changes from Committee members that will be incorporated in the design as a supplement to the application package.

Ms. Williams asked if there was a provision for the possible future installation of solar panels.

Mr. Graves explained that there are no current plans for solar panels due to cost concerns but the design of the roofs would allow for future installation.

Mr. Bacon asked if the tower had changed on the north section of DL-2.

Mr. Graves said that he has had many discussions with Mansfield's Director of Building and Housing Inspection Mike Nintean. He explained that to accommodate the building code requirement of the 70 foot average height, he had to adjust the roofline. He said one minor change was to incorporate gambrel roofs instead of mansard and to add vertical breaks to the back of the building.

Ms. Kueffner asked if the plans still called for an electrical room on the first floors.

Mr. Graves said yes. He explained that doing so allows the fire department to easily shut off power to all commercial uses in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Bacon asked for a review of the elevations of TS-2.

Mr. Graves said that the minor changes added detail. He referred the Committee to the corner of the west elevation and to the addition of windows in the stair tower. He said that other modifications were to enhance the entry to the residential units to better distinguish the entryway from the commercial spaces.

Mr. Kueffner commented that the square windows added to the stair tower did not do Mr. Graves' work justice and wondered if there were alternative options.

Mr. Graves said he had tried to use scaled down versions of the windows from the residential floors but that they did not look right.

Mr. Fitzgerald suggested adding trim to the top of the windows.

Mr. Hand said that he preferred the previous version of the west elevation.

Mr. Millman agreed but noted that it could be difficult to get the full understanding from the flat drawings as opposed the full-color renderings.

Mr. Bacon disagreed and noted he preferred the current version.

Ms. Moran asked if the color renderings were accurate in their depiction of the dimensions of the buildings.

Mr. Graves replied that the renderings were based on the architectural drawings, and so all the dimensions are accurate. However, he noted that the perspective of the drawings is flat whereas the renderings are closer to what a person would see standing in front of the buildings.

Ms. Williams asked for clarification on the plant grid.

Mr. Graves explained that building code limits the number of windows that can be on walls that are within a certain proximity to a property line. He said that he did not want to add fake windows, so the team decided on a plant grid. He added that the plant grid could be removed as it is not a structural element.

Mr. Padick commented that there will be awnings and signage for each business that will all be under separate review and that will add to the overall look of the buildings.

Ms. Paterson asked what the purpose of awnings would be.

Mr. Padick said that awnings can either be decorative or practical in providing shading or protection from the elements.

Mr. Toledano said that the developer will encourage businesses to add awnings but that it will be up to each individual business whether to add one, which is why they are not included in the drawings. He said that the team could consider adding one in to set a precedent.

Mr. Bacon supported the idea of including an awning as encouragement for other businesses to add them.

Mr. Graves noted that the amount of sunlight each storefront receives will be determined largely on which elevation they face. He said that some businesses, especially those with outdoor uses, may want the awnings for the shading, whereas those with less direct sunlight may not wish to add them.

Mr. Millman asked if his concerns about the experience of walking from the parking garage to DL – 1/2 had been addressed.

Mr. Toledano said that the sidewalks in that area may be included as part of the garage design. He explained that the garage and intermodal center will be included in a separate zoning permit, which will be brought to the Planning and Design Committee for review, and that permit will address the sidewalk area.

Mr. Millman expressed his desire to see a really standout building that accounts for the pedestrian experience.

Ms. van Zelm noted that the garage and intermodal center will be the topic of the next Planning and Design Committee meeting.

Ms. Roe expressed her hope that the design team will not be afraid to vary the shades of color among the building elements.

Mr. Bacon asked for clarification on the change in formatting in the design checklist on page five.

Mr. Graves said that he tried to follow the format of the original checklist, which included the variation seen on page five.

Mr. Millman asked to see the preliminary master plan.

Mr. Fitzgerald directed the Committee's attention to a design board depicting the preliminary master plan and noted that the only significant change was the relocation of DL-1 from a separate, stand-alone building to the current location adjacent to DL-2. He showed that the size of the Town Square had not changed from the preliminary master plan, approved in 2007 by the Planning and Zoning Commission, nor had the location of the roads.

Mr. Toledano commented that the current plans are remarkably close to the preliminary master plan.

Mr. Bacon noted a typographical error on page twelve.

Mr. Padick commented that John Jackman had some concerns regarding the questions on page seventeen and suggested that the team speak directly with him.

Mr. Bacon asked for clarification on a reference to the "design team" on page fourteen.

Mr. Toledano explained that the reference is to the design team for the parking garage and the intermodal center. He reviewed the selection process which the Town, as the recipients of the funding for both buildings, had conducted through bid processes as required by state and federal guidelines, respectively.

Mr. Padick said that he felt that signage fell into the same category as previously discussed elements, such as lighting, that can be fully determined at a later date because it will need to be consistent throughout the project.

Mr. Bacon asked if the requirement that surface parking be properly landscaped applied to the Bishop Center lot.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that the lot in question is a University-owned lot on University land.

Mr. Toledano added that the Bishop Center lot does not fall within the Storrs Center Special Design District and therefore is not held to the same requirements.

Mr. Millman asked if the list of trees to be used was derived from the guidelines.

Mr. Toledano replied in the affirmative and noted that some changes had been made based on input from Rudy Favretti.

Mr. Bacon asked how the team selects tree gates and whether they can accommodate growing and expanding tree bases.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that the tree gates will not be one solid piece but will be constructed of different pieces that can accommodate different sizes.

Ms. Williams asked if the plans included permeable pavement.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that only one section will include porous pavers. He then explained the various challenges of using porous pavers, from durability to the depth of the sheet rock below. He also reviewed the water retention and treatment plan with the Committee.

Mr. Toledano expanded on the explanation of the water system and reiterated the ultimate goal of improving the existing wetlands to the east of the project.

Mr. Bacon suggested that a final order of business might be to act on a motion. A draft of the motion was shared with the Committee. Mr. Bacon explained that the Board of Directors was hoping that the Committee would advise them as to whether the Committee believes the designs are consistent with the guidelines.

Mr. Kueffner asked for clarification of item six in the statement of use on page three.

Ms. van Zelm explained that item six was consistent with the conditions set forth by the Planning and Zoning Commission in their approval of the Special Design District in 2007.

Mr. Kueffner asked about the time constraints listed on page five and expressed concern that they were overly strict.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that the time constraints were based on Mansfield's zoning regulations.

Mr. Padick explained that the zoning regulations regarding time constraints of construction activity does not apply to interior work.

Mr. McNabb moved to approve the motion as presented: "In accordance with its charge, the Planning and Design Committee of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. has met during the last several months with representatives of Storrs Center Alliance, whose application (filed jointly with Education Realty Trust) for a zoning permit for plans to develop Storrs Center Phases 1A and 1B has been submitted to the Director of Planning for the Town of Mansfield. The Committee conducted meetings on November 16, 2010, December 15, 2010 and January 25, 2011 to review initial plans for Phases 1A and 1B, make recommendations for changes to the plans and review revised plans. Based on its review, the Committee is recommending to the Partnership Board of Directors that the zoning permit for Phases 1A and 1B meets the design guidelines adopted by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership and incorporated into the Special Design District regulations."

Mr. Hand seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Preparation for Public Hearing on February 1

Ms. Paterson requested that the fact that the proposed Town Square is the same size as was approved as part of the Preliminary Master Plan in 2007 be included in the presentation because there have been questions from the public on the subject.

Ms. van Zelm noted the suggestion and said that planning for the public hearing would begin later in the week.

Mr. Bacon said that Committee members would be welcome to speak at the public hearing and that he hoped they would all attend regardless of whether they planned to speak.

6. Topics for Next Meeting and Set Meeting Date

Ms. van Zelm noted that the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 15 at 5:00 pm in the Community Room of the Mansfield Community Center. She explained that the topic will be the parking garage and intermodal center and that the design teams of those projects will be in attendance. She added that additional stakeholders will be invited to attend the meeting, and so the larger venue was needed.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Kueffner moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Millman seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kathleen M. Paterson